UNITED
NATIONS

S

Security Council

PROVISIONAL

S/PV.2932
5 April 1991

ENGLISH

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWO THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-SECOND MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 5 April 1991, at 5.20 p.m.

President:	Mr. NOTERDAEME	(Belgium)
Members:	Austria	Mr. HOHENFELLNER
	China	Mr. LI Daoyu
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. BECHIO
	Cuba	Mr. ALARCON de QUESADA
	Ecuador	Mr. AYALA LASSO
	France	Mr. ROCHEREAU DE LA SABLIERE
	India	Mr. GHAREKHAN
	Romania	Mr. MUNTEANU
	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics	Mr. VORONTSOV
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir David HANNAY
	United States of America	Mr. PICKERING
	Yemen	Mr. AL-ASHTAL
	Zaire	Mr. KIBIDI NGOVUKA
	Zimbabwe	Mr. ZENENGA

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the Official Records of the Security Council.

Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, within one week, to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, Department of Conference Services, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

91-60511/A 4644V (E)

READEX FICHE

The meeting was called to order at 5.20 p.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted.

LETTER DATED 2 APRIL 1991 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TURKEY TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL (S/22435)

LETTER DATED 4 APRIL 1991 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES a.i. OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF FRANCE TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL (S/22442)

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Denmark, Germany, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Pakistan, Spain, Sweden and Turkey in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Al-Anbari (Iraq) took a place at the Council table; Mr. Mortensen (Denmark), Mr. Rantzau (Germany), Mr. Kharrazi (Islamic Republic of Iran), Mr. Hayes (Ireland), Mr. Scialoja (Italy), Mr. Feyder (Luxembourg), Mr. Van Schaik (Netherlands), Mr. Marker (Pakistan), Mr. Viqueira (Spain), Mr. Eliasson (Sweden) and Mr. Aksin (Turkey) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Security Council is meeting in response to the requests contained in letters dated 2 April 1991 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the

(The President)

United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/22435) and 4 April 1991 from the Chargé d'affaires ad interim of the Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/22442), respectively.

Members of the Council have before them document S/22448, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Belgium and France. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America have joined as sponsors of the draft resolution.

I should also like to draw the Council's attention to the following documents: S/22436 and S/22447, letters dated 3 and 4 April 1991, respectively, from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General; S/22440, letter dated 3 April 1991 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General; and S/22443, letter dated 4 April 1991 from the Permanent Representative of Luxembourg to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General.

The first speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Turkey. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. AKSIN (Turkey): First, I should like to express my delegation's great satisfaction at seeing you, Sir, the distinguished representative of a friendly country, presiding over the Council during this month. We are confident that your skill and experience will ensure the success of the Council's deliberations. I should also like to express our admiration for the able manner in which Ambassador Hohenfellner of Austria conducted the work of the Council during the course of the very eventful month of March. I wish to welcome Ambassador Jean-Jacques Bechio, the new Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire, who takes his place in the Security Council.

(Mr. Aksin, Turkey)

Turkey has asked for this meeting of the Security Council in view of the grave threat to the peace and security of the region posed by the tragic events taking place in Iraq. I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting.

In their attempt to put down the various insurgencies in that country the Iraqi armed forces have attacked cities and other localities with helicopters, tanks and artillery. This indiscriminate use of deadly firepower has caused the inhabitants of the localities under attack to flee for their safety. Whole cities stand deserted as a consequence of these actions. The situation in the northern part of the country adjacent to the borders of Turkey and Iran is especially alarming.

(Mr. Aksin, Turkey)

When we wrote our letter asking for this meeting, three days ago, there were more than 200,000, and perhaps 300,000, people who had been driven to the Iraqi-Turkish border. Of these, over 100,000 have trekked across the border, and are now reported to be in Turkey. We have reports that perhaps 600,000 more people are on the move, heading for the Turkish border.

This is a remote, mountainous area. The cold is intense at this time of the year. These helpless people, who are exposed to the elements, are Kurds, Arabs and Turkomans. These displaced people are Sunni and Shiite Moslems, and also Christians. Many of them are women and children. All of them are in mortal danger. The groups at the border have come under intense mortar fire. Many of the mortar shells have actually landed on the Turkish side of the border.

My Government has summoned the Iraqi Ambassador to issue a serious warning against continuing these attacks on defenceless civilians, and to demand an immediate halt to this callous use of firepower.

There is no way in which what is going on in northern Iraq can be justified as an internal affair of that country. Given the scale of the human tragedy and its international implications, this Council cannot allow itself to be relegated to the role of a mere spectator as these calamitous events unfold.

The threat posed by these events to the security of the region needs no elaboration. In the chaotic conditions prevailing in northern Iraq, it is conceivable that a million people might be forced to move from that country to Turkey. No country can cope with such a massive influx of destitute people fleeing for their lives. Turkey will not allow its border provinces to be overwhelmed by such a flood of displaced persons.

(Mr. Aksin, Turkey)

We expect the Council to take urgent and forceful action to secure an immediate cessation of the repression of the inhabitants of this area. The Council must send a clear signal to Iraq demanding respect for international borders and respect for human rights. Only in this way can the terrible pressure of humanity pressing against Iraq's borders be alleviated. At the same time, we are duty bound to take whatever measures we deem necessary to prevent the anarchy and chaos reigning on the Iraqi side of the border from spilling over into our country.

This does not mean that we are insensitive to the tragedy taking place in Iraq next door. We have the greatest sympathy and compassion for the plight of the victims of this man-made disaster. It will be recalled that in the summer of 1988, Turkey admitted over 60,000 Iraqis in similar circumstances; however, the scale of this calamity bears no comparison with what occurred in 1988. Our efforts to render humanitarian assistance are being swamped by the magnitude of the needs of these uprooted people. We have been providing truckloads of food as well as medical services to the needy people at our border. Efforts are being made to provide temporary shelter for those who have already crossed into Turkey.

But, clearly, this is an operation which requires the full backing and generous support of the international community. The economic burden of caring for these victims of civil war is too great for any country to bear alone. The Secretary-General should be requested to send a humanitarian mission, urgently, to this region to assess the situation, to report on the magnitude of the requirements in terms of humanitarian assistance and to propose arrangements for distributing this assistance to the displaced persons.

Before concluding, I would like to make it very clear that in calling for a meeting of the Security Council it was not our intention to interfere in Iraq's internal affairs. We recognize Article 2, paragraph 7 of the Charter, and believe

(Mr. Aksin, Turkey)

that it should be scrupulously observed. The steps we have taken have been taken because of the threat posed to the stability, security and peace of the region by Iraq's methods of repression. We firmly support the independence, sovereignty and integrity of Iraq. We feel that this independence, sovereigny and integrity should be protected without resort to methods that will directly affect the security of Iraq's neighbours. We welcome the news that Iraq has declared an amnesty, and hope that this will be backed by firm action which will inspire reconciliation and give confidence to the displaced persons that they can return in safety to their homes in Iraq.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I thank the representative of Turkey for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Pakistan. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. MARKER (Pakistan): Allow me to extend the warm felicitations of my delegation on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. We are confident that your diplomatic skills, experience and profound knowledge of the issues before us will guide the work of the Council to a most successful outcome.

I would also like to extend my delegation's appreciation of the excellent manner in which your predecessor, Ambassador Peter Hohenfellner of Austria, conducted the deliberations of the Council during the month of March.

Through you, I would also like to extend a warm welcome to Ambassador Jean-Jacques Bechio, Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire to the United Nations. I am positive that his wisdom, experience and diplomatic expertise will help the Council in the discharge of its duties.

(Mr. Marker, Pakistan)

We have just witnessed an unfortunate, tragic and bloody war in the Persian Gulf region. At a time when the region is still reeling under the effects of the war, and at a time when the devastated and shattered people of Iraq and Kuwait are struggling for existence under conditions where even the very basic amenities for living do not exist, we are confronted with a situation in which a large segment of the population of Iraq continues to suffer death and destruction.

My delegation would wish to emphasize, at the outset, that as a matter of principle Pakistan is opposed to any form of interference in the internal affairs of any country, and that this is especially so in the case of a brotherly, Muslim country, whose territorial integrity must be fully respected. At the same time, however, we cannot conceal our dismay at the infringement of human rights that is now taking place in Iraq, and at the continuing death and destruction in that devastated land.

At an earlier meeting of the Security Council during the recent conflict, my delegation expressed the anguish and concern of the people of Pakistan at the casualties suffered by innocent Iraqi civilians as a result of the bombing. The same sentiments of concern for the safety and welfare of the Iraqi people compels my delegation to appear once again before the Council and appeal for restraint.

Although the liberation of Kuwait is complete, peace has still not returned to a large number of people in Iraq who, for the past few weeks, have been the target of severe repression. The intensity of reprisals and military operations has forced a large number of the victims, many of them women and children, to abandon their homes and flee towards the borders of Iran and Turkey. Reportedly, approximately 220,000 Iraqi refugees are on the Turkish border alone, and a similarly massive number have sought refuge in Iran.

(Mr. Marker, Pakistan)

For Pakistan, which has provided refuge to more than 3 million Afghans over the past decade, the plight of Iraqis fleeing their own country is particularly poignant and distressing. Pakistan has consistently opposed violations of human rights in all parts of the world, and will continue to raise its voice against violence in any form. My country is thus deeply concerned at the current violation of the human rights of the Kurdish and other Iraqi citizens. We appeal for a stop to the military action and urge compassion and peaceful negotiation in the settlement of issues.

My delegation will support the Security Council in any action it may take to achieve these ends and prevent the further loss of precious, human lives.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I thank the representative of Pakistan for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. KHARRAZI (Islamic Republic of Iran): Allow me to begin by expressing my delegation's felicitations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. I am confident that the Council will fully benefit from your wisdom, experience and leadership in its important tasks during this month. Let me also thank your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Austria, who, with his well-deserved reputation for integrity and professionalism, so ably conducted the affairs of the Council last month.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, sharing long borders as well as historical, religious and cultural ties with Iraq, has witnessed with deep concern and sadness the developments inside Iraq in the past few months. Throughout the crisis that began with Iraq's occupation of Kuwait, the Islamic Republic of Iran actively endeavoured to mitigate the suffering of the Iraqi people in both the diplomatic and the humanitarian fields. Our resolve to refrain from engagement in the hostilities in spite of all difficulties; our commitment to the territorial integrity and political independence of regional countries, including Kuwait and Iraq; our objection to the long-term presence of foreign forces in the region; our insistence on minimizing the hardship of the Kuwaiti and Iraqi people; our attempts to prevent and bring an early end to the bloodshed in the war between Iraq and coalition forces; our strong objection to the bombardment of civilian quarters inside Iraq; and our insistence on the necessity of maintaining the sanctity of holy cities inside Iraq were the major characteristics of our policy vis-à-vis the recent hostilities.

(Mr. Kharrazi, Islamic Republic of Iran)

The very same principles govern our approach to the horrifying developments inside Iraq today. Again, in spite of all pressures and in the extremely difficult circumstances resulting from the unprecedented brutality exercised in crushing the uprising inside Iraq, we have refrained from interfering in the internal affairs of Iraq. But, as a neighbouring country with very strong bonds of religion and culture with the Iraqi people, the people and the Government of Iran cannot remain indifferent to the untold suffering of the Iraqi people and the indiscriminate measures taken by the Iraqi armed forces against innocent civilians, just as we did not remain silent when the suffering was inflicted by the allied forces.

Motivated by our strong desire to prevent the unfolding tragedy inside Iraq, the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in the very early stages of the uprising, called on the Iraqi Government to come to terms with its people, to submit to its will, and to adopt the approach of accommodation instead of confrontation and repression. We regret that this call to reason went unheeded inside the Iraqi leadership, as did our attempts in another context throughout the tragic military confrontation.

My country has had the humanitarian duty of providing refuge, as of noon yesterday, to more than 110,000 Iraqi civilians escaping their own Government's armed forces. Many more have been struggling to cross the borders into Iran. According to the latest information, the number of refugees has now exceeded 180,000, including about 120,000 in the north. This shows that the pace of the influx in the north is unbelievably rapid, while in the south it has subsided, but continues at a slower pace. The most conservative estimates put the number of Iraqi civilians who will take refuge in Iran within the next few days at half a million.

(Mr. Kharrazi, Islamic Republic of Iran)

Other neighbouring countries are also faced with similar flows of civilians escaping the Iraqi army. This has added another international dimension to the crisis inside Iraq, threatening the security of the neighbouring countries and presenting the potential to further destabilize inter-State relations in our region. Furthermore, the magnitude of the problem of refugees in terms of numbers and the rate and speed of the influx, and in terms of the severity of the injuries and problems of some of the refugees, has made dealing effectively with this humanitarian problem beyond the capability of any one country of the region. Thus, there is a need for concerted international effort to deal both with the causes of the crisis and with its immediate symptoms.

In addition to the heavy task of sheltering the innocent victims of this tragedy, we have listened to gruesome details of horrifying accounts of the repression narrated by its victims. These accounts, as well as the available evidence, point towards the use of indiscriminate methods and unconventional weapons by the Iraqi armed forces against the people of the affected areas. These victims, whose accounts are now corroborated by televised pcitures, talk also of unprecedented desecration of holy shrines inside Iraq.

It is evident that the situation inside Iraq, due to its gravity and implications for the neighbouring countries, has consequences that threaten regional and international peace and security. We believe that it is incumbent upon the Security Council to take immediate measures to put an early end to the suffering of the Iraqi people.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I thank the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Iraq, on whom I now call.

Mr. AL-ANBARI (Iraq) (interpretation from Arabic): Iraq has suffered since 6 August of last year - and continues to suffer - from an economic embargo by land, sea and air, during which the Iraqi people have been deprived of even food and medicine. And as the Council is aware, beginning on 16 January of this year, the United States and its allies waged round the clock air raids against all cities and villages in Iraq, laying waste urban and rural areas and killing civilians and military personnel alike.

The damages caused by such an unprecedented bombing campaign have been summarized by the United Nations mission which recently visited Iraq as having relegated it to a pre-industrial age, with its economy and basic infrastructure completely devastated, and all necessary means of daily modern life support for both civilians and military personnel destroyed.

That was the fruit of the aggression waged against Iraq, an aggression which led to the well-known consequences. The suffering of the Iraqi people in many cities and villages - whether because of starvation, the lack of any source of drinking water or electricity - led many Iraqis, following the destruction of their homes and their food sources, to seek food, shelter and medicine in the north.

Now we see the very perpetrators of these crimes, of this aggression against the Iraqi people, shedding crocodile tears for their plight and suffering.

I have had the opportunity, following instructions from my Government, to present documents condemning the acts of foreign intervention by some adjoining States - very regrettable acts - to try to sow dissent in the towns and villages of Iraq, in both the south and the north. We have firm evidence, either from those who have been imprisoned, or those who have confessed to acts of sabotage and destruction in many towns and villages in all parts of Iraq - north, south and in

(Mr. Al-Anbari, Iraq)

the middle of the country - proving the intervention of these neighbouring States in the internal affairs of Iraq, and their attempt to destabilize Iraq and perhaps even to partition Iraq into many mini-States.

Despite this, we continue to hear that this unjust war was not being waged against the Iraqi people. Nevertheless, we find, too, that all resolutions of the Security Council stress respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq and reject intervention in Iraq's internal affairs. But those very States continue to attempt to partition Iraq and to annihilate its people; and they continue to attempt to intervene in our internal affairs.

This draft resolution itself is a flagrant, illegitimate intervention in Iraq's internal affairs and a violation of Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations which prohibits intervention in the internal affairs of other States.

I believe that, instead of shedding tears, instead of appealing to international humanitarian organizations to come to the assistance of the Iraqi people, the Security Council should have undertaken one essential act to lessen the pressure on and the plight of the Iraqi people: the lifting of the economic embargo, thus allowing the Iraqi people to buy food, medicine, and all the amenities to ensure a return to normal life in the country.

We have all seen on our television screens how some saboteurs who penetrated through the borders have wreaked destruction on many towns and villages in Iraq and how they have killed many innocent people. What reaction did the Security Council expect from the Iraqi Government and from the Iraqi army? Were we to let these saboteurs carry out their evil deeds, or were we to attempt to protect our civilians and to ensure law and order in the country? This is indeed what took place, God be thanked. Peace and stability have returned to all corners of our cherished Iraq. Yes, the saboteurs escaped before facing the Iraqi army. They

(Mr. Al-Anbari, Iraq)

went beyond the borders to safe haven, and through terror and intimidation on their way, convinced many innocent citizens, particularly in northern Iraq, to leave and go towards the northern and eastern international borders of the country.

We have declared that all Iraqi citizens may return at any time to their cities and homes. Furthermore, the Iraqi Government yesterday declared a general amnesty to all those who have contravened the laws, with the exception of those who have committed major crimes and murder, who will be prosecuted. All others have been forgiven all crimes and contraventions committed before leaving the country.

On the other hand, this morning, following instructions from my Government, I informed the President of the Security Council and the Secretary-General of the Organization that the Iraqi Governmert welcomes an international mission to be formed by the Secretary-General or the Security Council in Iraq, with full guarantees for free movement and communications, so that its members may ascertain the facts and see things as they stand and then present their report to the Council or to the Secretary-General.

I had expected that the Security Council would wait and find out the true facts from such a mission before making haste - which has been its habit in the past months - and producing a draft resolution which, with all due respect to its sponsors, or those who would vote in its favour, offers no positive hope for the Iraqi people, with the exception of its first paragraph. With the exception of that paragraph, it seems to be a condemnation of the Iraqi Government. It does not represent a condemnation of the victim alone but, rather, is an attempt to claim innocence for the aggressors who have waged destruction against Iraq, as well as for those States which have attempted to foment dissent in Iraq and sent saboteurs to destroy towns and villages in my country.

(Mr. Al-Anbari, Iraq)

Rather than condemning those parties, the sponsors of this draft resolution now call on the Security Council to condemn Iraq, instead of helping it.

I believe that it is the duty of everyone to assist Iraq in this critical period to stand on its feet again after the destruction wrought upon it - to do so, on the one hand, through lifting all economic sanctions and, on the other, through waiting for the return of the mission that may be sent by the Secretary-General or the Security Council to Iraq, in order to ascertain the real facts, without exaggeration and without the selfish objectives that some may have in mind.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I should like to inform members of the Council that I have just received letters from the representatives of Norway and Portugal in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Huslid (Norway) and Mr. Da Costa Pereira (Portugal) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall take it that that is the case.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I shall first call on those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

Mr. MUNTEANU (Romania): My delegation wishes to make a statement before the voting on the draft resolution in document S/22448.

At the very outset, my delegation would like to stress that the situation in Iraq is very serious, indeed alarming. It is quite understandable that the international community should be deeply concerned by the inhuman armed repression being carried out on a massive scale by the Iraqi authorities against their own population. The actions undertaken by Iraq against its population are correctly described as a violation of all norms of behaviour and of all Iraq's commitments arising from international legal instruments to respect and protect the fundamental human rights and freedoms of all its citizens.

As is emphasized in the draft resolution before the Council, this armed repression has led to a massive flow of refugees across Iraq's international frontiers. In fact, there is a mass exodus of a deeply disturbing magnitude. This massive flow of refugees is a source of tremendous human suffering. Romania's position on the general substantive aspect of the draft resolution was recently expressed by it through its participation in the General Assembly's adoption without a vote on 18 December 1990 of resolution 45/153, entitled "Human rights and mass exoduses".

We are indeed deeply disturbed by the continuing scale and magnitude of exoduses of refugees and displacements of population in many regions of the world and by the human suffering of millions of refugees and displaced persons. At the same time, we are aware of the increasingly heavy burden being imposed, particularly on poor neighbouring countries but also upon the international community as a whole, by these sudden mass exoduses and displacements of population. Like other countries, we express our concern at the serious and far-reaching consequences which the presence of massive numbers of refugees has on

(Mr. Munteanu, Romania)

the security and stability of the neighbouring countries, and the overall negative impact on their basic infrastructure and social and economic development.

We expect Iraq to guarantee respect for international standards applicable under international instruments in this field. In this regard, Iraq must put an immediate end to the atrocities against its population, resulting in the uprooting of a vast number of persons.

At the same time, the international community cannot remain passive in the face of such tremendous human suffering. Indeed, the international community is confronted with a great humanitarian problem, and the United Nations system should do its best to address urgently the critical needs of all the refugees and the displaced Iraqi population.

From that point of view, the delegation of Romania commends the delegation of France for its initiative in preparing the draft resolution before us, which deals with a real humanitarian issue of dramatic, indeed tragic, proportions. We are grateful also to you, Mr. President, for the great wisdom and patience you displayed in the process of negotiating the draft resolution.

Questions pertaining to the situation of various segments or components of populations from the ethnic, linguistic or religious points of view are matters of the national jurisdiction of States. In this respect, no one can disregard the imperative nature of Article 2, paragraph 7 of the Charter of the United Nations, which provides that

> "Nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any State or shall require the Members to submit such matters to settlement under the present Charter ...".

We are indeed very happy to see this fundamental provision of the Charter well reflected in the draft resolution before us.

(Mr. Munteanu, Romania)

If we agree - and that is the case - that we should deal with an important humanitarian issue and a real threat to international peace and security, we have to take into account the fact that the cooperation of all States is needed in order to solve the issue. We welcome in this respect operative paragraph 6 of the draft resolution, which contains an appeal addressed to all States and to all humanitarian organizations to contribute to the humanitarian relief efforts. That is a very positive element of the draft. Indeed, it is generally recognized in the United Nations that humanitarian cooperation should make an effective and practical contribution to the task of preventing mass and flagrant violations of human rights.

We all agree that the armed repression of the Iraqi population can be a legitimate concern of the international community. Our action in this field should be guided by the principles of non-selectivity, by impartiality and objectivity. By the draft resolution under consideration we should not create a precedent that could be used - or, rather, misused - in the future for political purposes. If we want to prove that we have an unbiased and fair approach to the issue under consideration, we should emphasize its real humanitarian nature, addressing a special case in the aftermath of the Gulf war, and we should, with a feeling of responsibility, avoid any potential implications that could jeopardize the present and future actions of the Security Council.

(Mr. Munteanu, Romania)

Today, Romania is a democratic country carrying on the noble heritage of the revolution of December 1989. We know well the value of our freedom, and we are proud of it. We still have in our collective memory the true meaning of the repression to which the Romanian people were subjected during the old régime.

We are sensitive to the human sufferings of other peoples, and, in the case under consideration, we are aware of the alarming situation in Iraq and of the necessity to adopt appropriate measures to put an end to the inhuman repression being carried out on a massive scale against the Iraqi population. We fully support such measures.

But we also know that on such an issue the solidarity of the members of the Security Council is essential. As my delegation has stated on other occasions, that solidarity is a guarantee of the success of our actions. Therefore, it should be promoted and protected. No precedent which could erode such a solidarity should be established; on the contrary, all efforts should be deployed to strengthen our solidarity.

It is in this framework and in the light of these considerations that my delegation will vote on the draft resolution in document S/22448.

Mr. AL-ASHTAL (Yemen)(interpretation from Arabic): It is well known that wars harm civilian populations first. Indeed, civilian populations are the first victims of wars. Such is the case in Iraq today. The population of Iraq suffered for 8 months from the embargo imposed upon Iraq; then the Iraqi people suffered from the war. Now the Iraqi people are suffering from instability and turmoil and from the unrest inside the country.

From the outset the delegation of Yemen opposed the war, and we have expressed our support, sympathy and solidarity with the innocent civilian population of Iraq. We stated that yesterday, and we do so today. We declare our support and

(Mr. Al-Ashtal, Yemen)

sympathy for the Iraqis who now find themselves prey to every form of suffering throughout the country, and we call upon the international community to contribute towards efforts to alleviate the suffering and pain of the Iraqi population. We would like to take this opportunity to express our thanks to the Secretary-General, who has mobilized all the energies of the United Nations system to reach out to the civilian population. We also welcome the offers made by many countries to provide aid to the Iraqi people, whether refugees or otherwise.

We would have supported the present draft resolution had it been confined to addressing humanitarian issues. There are many bodies within the United Nations system that are competent to address them. However, the draft resolution now before the Council, although dealing with the humanitarian issues that face the Iraqi people, focuses on only one area and one category of the Iraqi population. We object to the draft resolution because it attempts to politicize the humanitarian issue. Indeed, that, in our view, is the thrust of the draft resolution.

The draft resolution claims that there is a problem threatening international peace and security. We do not share that view. There is no conflict or war taking place across the borders of Iraq with its neighbours. The draft resolution also refers to political developments within Iraq, but according to Article 2 of the United Nations Charter it is not within the Council's purview to address internal issues in any country. Further, the draft resolution calls for internal dialogue, and that is obviously an attempt to intervene in the internal affairs of Iraq.

However, our position with regard to the draft resolution is based not only on certain provisions in its text but also on our objection to the fact that the whole issue is not within the competence of the Security Council. The Security Council is mandated only to safeguard international peace and security. In our view, the

(Mr. Al-Ashtal, Yemen)

draft resolution sets a dangerous precedent that could open the way to diverting the Council away from its basic functions and responsibilities for safeguarding international peace and security and towards addressing the internal affairs of countries.

We wonder what State, big or small, has no internal problems; what State will not at some point in time encounter internal difficulties and experience transborder problems? In our opinion the text of the draft resolution is a first departure from the rule of maintaining a strict focus on the Council's responsibilities under the Charter. Over the past 40 years the Council has consistently refrained from intervention in the internal affairs of States.

On Wednesday of this week, when the Council voted on resolution 687 (1991), I mentioned in my statement what we view as a growing tendency on the part of the Security Council to circumvent the Charter of the United Nations. The draft resolution now before us is yet another example of such circumvention.

We have been told that one of the pillars of the new world order is respect for law and the rule of law. That statement has given us cause for hope. What we are witnessing, however, is in point of fact a gradual retreat from law and the rule of law and, in some cases, an attempt to circumvent the international rule of law for political ends.

(Mr. Al-Ashtal, Yemen)

We find this new world order ominous. We see a lack of balance. Indeed, there is an imbalance here. We see no firm application of law, and unless we are extremely careful this may lead to a change of the rules that have contributed to stability over the past four decades. It is indeed a strange world, and we may be in for many surprises.

Mr. ZENENGA (Zimbabwe): The draft resolution we are about to vote on addresses a very complex and delicate situation. Zimbabwe believes that a domestic political conflict lies at the core of the situation in the areas of Iraq referred to in the draft resolution.

We recognize that a serious humanitarian situation has arisen as a result of these developments. However, this is in our view essentially an internal matter, as defined in paragraph 7 of Article 2 of the Charter. It is our view that addressing this situation in the manner suggested by the draft resolution would be inconsistent with the clear parameters of the Council's competence as provided for in the Charter.

The draft resolution refers directly to the confrontation between the Government of Iraq and its population. It prescribes specific measures which it expects the Government of Iraq to take in resolving what is a domestic conflict. In our view, this would be inconsistent with the Charter. It also contradicts what the draft resolution states in its second preambular paragraph.

The humanitarian situation emanating from the present circumstances causes us great concern. We have taken note of the concerns expressed by the Governments of both Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Iran. However, we believe that the serious humanitarian situation and the question of refugees can be adequately addressed by the appropriate organs of the United Nations. The Secretary-General has on many

(Mr. Zenenga, Zimbabwe)

occasions taken prompt and appropriate action to alleviate the suffering of refugees through the specialized agencies when similar situations have arisen. The present situation should be treated no differently.

While we realize that the humanitarian dimensions affect neighbouring States, we do not believe that this in any way makes the internal conflict in Iraq an issue that the Council should be seized of.

Mr. AYALA LASSO (Ecuador) (interpretation from Spanish): For several days the press has been bringing us tragic news of events affecting the Iraqi population. The tragedy that has been described to us is undoubtedly grave. It has shocked the entire civilized community of nations. There is no country in which comments have not been made about what has been happening in Iraq and in which peoples have not expressed their rejection of the situation and their demand that the international community act to remedy the situation. The acts of violence and cruelty that have occurred do violence to the spirit of the civilized community.

It is against this background that we are now considering the draft resolution that France has submitted to the Council for its consideration in document S/22448.

In order to take a position on the subject, Ecuador has most carefully studied two fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter. The first is that of unrestricted respect for human rights. In the Charter's preamble we see that the peoples of the United Nations are determined

"to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person,"

and

"to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war".

We see that we are determined to make a world in which the human race can live.

(Mr. Ayala Lasso, Ecuador)

Any society - civilian or political, national or international - must be anthropocentric, in the sense that society is born for the human being and is for the good of the human being. Therefore, respect for the essence of the human being is a universal requirement which must be accepted and must be demanded.

Ecuador has accepted all commitments and subscribed to all agreements on human rights, and our record in this respect has never been questioned. I cannot tell the Council that there have been no shortcomings, because all human endeavours are subject to shortcomings, but there is no doubt that my country has always followed a policy of unconditional, unrestricted respect for human rights.

That is perhaps why over a decade ago Ecuador submitted an initiative to a number of Latin American countries that led to the signing of a document entitled "Charter of Conduct", the third paragraph of which states:

> "The Presidents of the countries subscribing to the document reiterate their solemn commitment to the fact that respect for human, political, economic and social rights constitutes a fundamental norm of the internal conduct of the countries of the Andean Group, that their defence is an international obligation to which States are committed, and that therefore joint action in defence of those rights does not violate the principle of non-intervention."

My country has regarded that doctrine as one of the pillars of its policy on human rights.

The second principle is that of non-intervention in the internal affairs of other States. The United Nations Charter considers that to be one of the main pillars of the community of nations and the ability of nations to work together effectively.

(Mr. Ayala Lasso, Ecuador)

It is a principle which must be completely respected today, tomorrow and for ever. It is a principle which admits of no question, and must be given our complete support.

None the less, the application of this principle prompts us to think that the international community cannot remain indifferent to what is happening in Iraq. It might perhaps have been a question of internal jurisdiction in Iraq, if the situation had not gone beyond the borders of the country. The phenomenon which we are considering, in fact, has now reached the borders of neighbouring countries; the use of force has now been extended up to the borders of two of those neighbouring countries; the human pressures that the displaced communities of over 1 million people are exerting on those borders constitute, my delegation believes, a threat to international peace and security. In other words, this is a situation that goes beyond the sphere of the internal affairs of a State; it is a situation which is affecting international relations and may become a threat to peace. This has been the understanding of those countries which have sent communications to the Council condemning these events, communicating their concern and requesting action to prevent their being directly and immediately affected.

It might be said that, even assuming that the measures I have just set out are taken, the Security Council would not be the body competent to take them, given that Chapter IX of the Charter says that it is the General Assembly or the Economic and Social Council which would be the competent bodies in such situations.

This would be so - I repeat - if we were dealing solely with a case of violation of human rights by a country within its own frontiers; however, once again I say that this is a situation which affects international peace and security, and I therefore believe that the Council is competent to take a stand and to act by taking steps to put an end to this situation.

(Mr. Ayala Lasso, Ecuador)

It is Ecuador's hope that Iraq will put an end to this persecution, that it will put an end to this indiscriminate violence against communities which are part of that nation, and that respect for the rights of those communities will be re-established.

I read just a short time ago that one of those communities had complained publicly of having had a shortage of friends throughout its history, and I think we, all the peoples of the world, should show that community that it does have friends and that we are concerned about its present and its future.

The statements we have just heard to the effect that the Government of Iraq has extended an amnesty are commendable; of course, we are not aware of the details of this amnesty, which will certainly have conditions attached, but it is something which may be a step in the right direction.

We also believe that it is encouraging that Iraq has expressed its readiness to accept a fact-finding mission; the Secretary-General will certainly have taken note of this offer, and will act under one of the provisions of the draft resolution now before us.

Taking into account that in the text of the resolution we see clear mention made of paragraph 7 of Article 2 of the Charter and also because of the fact that the situation under consideration is a threat to international peace and security, requiring us all to do everything in our power to see to it that this world is a better world for its inhabitants - the human beings whose future we are considering - Ecuador will vote in accordance with the above principles.

Mr. KIBIDI NGOVUKA (Zaire) (interpretation from French): Once again, the delegation of Zaire would like to wish you, Sir, every success in your work as President of the Security Council for the month of April.

I should like to avail myself of this opportunity to tell the Ambassador of Austria how impressed we were with his many intellectual and diplomatic qualities,

(Mr. Kibidi Ngoyuka, Zaire)

all of which enabled him to do an excellent job as President of the Council throughout the month of March.

We are called upon to vote upon a draft resolution submitted by France. Yesterday, in informal consultations, we stated clearly that the issue raised in that resolution was strictly humanitarian, since the repression of the Kurds and other Iraqis is forcing them to leave their homeland and seek refuge in neighbouring countries, especially Turkey and Iran.

We believe that this situation has to do with the internal policy of Iraq, but that it could have consequences which might result in a threat to international peace and security. In order to prevent any deterioration in the political and economic situation in the countries of a region which has been hard hit by two successive wars waged by Iraq against Iran and then by Iraq against Kuwait, my country will vote in favour of this resolution.

We are aware that, while the United Nations Charter cannot be tampered with, as to do so would weaken the Council's credibility, we must, however, in this particular case be far-sighted indeed if we are to avoid the occurrence of the worst in the Gulf region.

We are, therefore, pleased that the sponsors of the draft resolution have agreed to the inclusion in its preamble of a reference to Article 2, paragraph 7 of the Charter.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I thank the representative of Zaire for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. BECHIO (Côte d'Ivoire) (interpretation from French): The Secretary-General, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, in his first report on the United Nations, in 1982, elaborated on the idea of enhancing the authority of the United Nations, stressing the fact that the United Nations might play a preventive role in helping maintain the peace. He indicated that Governments can, in many ways, help

(Mr. Bechio, Côte d'Ivoire)

strengthen the system set forth in the Charter, and one of these ways is, he said, to appeal to the Security Council, and not to wait until the last minute to do so. If the Council were to monitor dangerous situations closely, and if it were to have discussions with the parties involved before reaching a critical threshold in a situation, perhaps we could often resolve disputes before they degenerated into conflicts.

The recent war in the Gulf, and the consequences thereof, which we have unceasingly deplored, shed new light on these wise words of the Secretary-General, and encourage the Security Council towards the preventive action it should take as part of its role in maintaining international peace and security.

(Mr. Bechio, Côte d'Ivoire)

It is a secret to no one that the massive exodus of the Kurdish population fleeing repression in Iraq threatens the stability of the host States. Furthermore, the countries concerned, and in particular Iraq's neighbours, have brought the situation before the Security Council. They have expressed their concern at this large influx of refugees and have also indicated that shots have been fired across the borders. Can the Council turn a deaf ear to their cry for help and take refuge behind the banner of non-interference in the internal affairs of another State?

We have before us a draft resolution which, we must say, is far from commanding the unanimous approval of the members. Reasoning has been put forward on all sides that can be defended from different standpoints. But my delegation feels that we should not focus on the points that divide us, but rather work in the quest for a consensus on the basis of elements and facts that are known to everyone. To this, we must add the pressing humanitarian problem posed by these refugees. Indeed, tens of thousands of men, women and children are subject to the elements, to hunger, to bombing. Can the Security Council be indifferent to so much human misery and suffering by invoking its incompetence to deal with humanitarian issues such as these, as some maintain?

Someone said yesterday that we should not lose sight of the fact that the longer we debate, the longer the list of victims will be. Neighbouring countries have drawn our attention to the possibility of a breach of international peace and security and to the danger that this massive exodus poses.

My delegation believes that if an end is not put to this brutal repression, if urgent humanitarian assistance is not deployed as soon as possible, we can expect developments that may come as a shocking surprise to us. The draft resolution before us, we believe, meets these concerns.

(Mr. Bechio, Côte d'Ivoire)

In any event, Côte d'Ivoire intends to support actions aimed at putting an end to this painful situation. I cannot conclude without reaffirming my country's respect for the principles of non-intervention in the internal affairs of other States and of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of States. Indeed, Côte d'Ivoire remains convinced that only respect by all States for those principles cherished by the United Nations and by the Non-Aligned Movement can make it possible for the United Nations to achieve the goal of universal peace and brotherhood.

Mr. ALARCON DE QUESADA (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): Throughout the consultations that we had yesterday, and during this meeting as well, reference has been made to the relationship that exists between the problem before us and certain principles and norms contained in the Charter of the United Nations. I believe that we all agree about the importance of Article 2, paragraph 7, of the Charter, which has been recalled in the preamble of the draft resolution before us.

In our view, the Security Council and all of the United Nations are duty bound to comply with that Article, whose text we need not reread. But they also have the duty to see to it that that fundamental principle is not violated.

We were struck by the fact that, thus far, no reference has been made in our deliberations to certain information which is in the public domain and which indicates how clearly at least one permanent member of the Council for some time now has been involved in activities that do intervene in Iraqi internal affairs and that are closely related to the issues now before the Council. I am certain that The New York Times is widely read among us and that some saw in yesterday's issue the few paragraphs that I shall now read out.

(Mr. Alarcon de Quesada, Cuba)

(spoke in English)

"The Associated Press, quoting 'intelligence sources,' reported today that in January, around the time he was publicly exhorting the Iraqi people to overthrow Saddam Hussein, Mr. Bush signed secret orders authorizing the C.I.A. to aid rebel factions inside Iraq.

"The orders were described as granting broad and general authority for clandestine activities to undermine Mr. Hussein and to support efforts by opposition forces inside Iraq.

"The AP said it did not know to what extent the CIA authority might have been used.

"Mr. Bush recently sidestepped reporters' questions about any contacts between the United States and Iraqi rebels. And, asked about such collaboration at a congressional hearing two weeks ago, Defense Secretary Dick Cheney said only, 'That's a subject I can't get into in open session'." (New York Times, 4 April 1991, p. 10)

(continued in Spanish)

Clearly, what Mr. Cheney could not discuss in public has quite a lot to do with a situation that is in violation of the principle of non-intervention, a principle with which the permanent members of the Security Council and the other members of the international community must comply.

Thus, if we are really going to express concern about the conflict which, we are informed, continues on Iraqi territory, we have no right to disregard the fact that, in an open way - in a way that has been very difficult to conceal - it has been revealed that a major Power is involved in efforts to overthrow the Government of Iraq and to intervene in the internal struggle which, it is reported, is occurring in that country.

(Mr. Alarcon de Quesada, Cuba)

This, in any event, is the issue on which, in accordance with the Charter, the Security Council would have power to decide. But to speak of the internal situation in Iraq, of the instability that may prevail throughout or in part of that country, to disregard the fact that a major Power has been overtly promoting and organizing such activity, is to say the least inconsistent.

The text of the draft resolution submitted to us glosses over that political aspect of the situation and in more than one paragraph refers to questions that are clearly part of the internal jurisdiction of the State of Iraq, contradicting the preambular paragraph in which the Council recalls paragraph 7 of Article 2 of the Charter.

(Mr. Alarcon de Quesada, Cuba)

It has also been said that, in any event, there are humanitarian concerns over the plight of civilians, of women, children and the elderly, to which the international community should devote its attention. We believe these are legitimate concerns but we feel that the members of the Council do not possess divine powers but, rather, have obligations that have been entrusted to them by all the Members of the United Nations and that are reflected in the Charter.

If it is felt that the international community should show concern for the humanitarian aspects of a question, then the Security Council simply has no right to do so in a way which the Charter specifically precludes. The Security Council has every right in the world to fulfil its role and to exercise its powers. In other words, it has every right in the world to act in accordance with Article 24, paragraph 2, which states that

"the specific powers granted to the Security Council for the discharge of [its] duties are laid down in Chapters VI, VII, VIII and XII".

Those are the four Chapters under which the Security Council has specific powers granted to it by the entire membership of the United Nations. Those Chapters do not include the questions of a humanitarian nature about which concern has been expressed in this Chamber. The Charter devotes Chapter IX to those questions. The drafters of the Charter clearly established in Article 60 of Chapter IX that

"Responsibility for the discharge of the functions of the Organization set forth in this Chapter shall be vested in the General Assembly".

The Security Council simply has no right to violate the principle of non-intervention. It has no right to intervene unduly in the internal affairs of any State. It has no right to intervene unduly in matters within the competence of other organs of the Organization. If the Security Council considers that a subject is important and requires urgent action, the Charter provides the channels for that purpose.

(Mr. Alarcon de Quesada, Cuba)

I wonder why it has not been possible to follow the procedure laid down in the Charter in Article 20, which states:

"The General Assembly shall meet in regular annual sessions and in such special sessions as occasion may require. Special sessions shall be convoked by the Secretary-General at the request of the Security Council or of a majority of the Members of the United Nations."

It would be extremely simple for the Council to combine the concern that has been expressed at this situation with respect for this little blue book, which has increasingly become a clandestine document of our Organization.

The General Assembly could easily be convened tomorrow by the Security Council, thereby enabling the item to be considered and decisions to be taken rapidly. It would not be the first time the General Assembly has been convened on an urgent basis. But what would the difference be? The difference would be that we would be respecting the Charter and would not be taking a course that allows this organ to assume powers that it does not possess, functions that no one has given it; a course of action that makes us depart from the letter and spirit of the Charter and that turns the Organization into a system dominated by an oligarchical group which attributes to itself powers that no one has given it and therefore imposes its will on the entire Organization.

I believe that if it is important and legitimate and appropriate for us to be concerned at the situation of the civilian population in Iraq and other parts of the world, it is equally important, legitimate and appropriate - and even more urgent - for the Members of the United Nations to show their concern about stemming the tendency to manipulate the Security Council and the Organization into conforming with the convenience and interests of just a few of the Members, because this is something that affects the entire world, the civilian populations of all

(Mr. Alarcon de Quesada, Cuba)

countries, whether or not they are members of the Security Council, and the most cherished and legitimate interests of the entire international community.

It is also a bit surprising to see the Security Council dealing with humanitarian aspects or consequences affecting the civilian population in Iraq when, at the same time, the Council has been extremely reluctant to consider the situation on the basis of specific, objective, impartial reports submitted to it at its own request.

I have no doubt whatsoever that there are thousands of displaced persons in Iraq, thousands of refugees, thousands of persons seeking refuge and shelter and better living conditions. No one can have any doubt about that. We have received a report from the Secretary-General, prepared on the basis of Mr. Ahtisaari's mission. The Council expressed its satisfaction with the mission and indicated that immediate action would be taken in connection with it.

In this report Mr. Ahtisaari described the situation before the beginning of the bombing of Iraq. He said:

"Sanctions decided upon by the Security Council had already adversely affected the country's ability to feed its people." (S/22366, para. 11)

This was the case before the destruction that we all know was launched against the country and that Mr. Ahtisaari describes in his report.

The draft resolution would establish that Iraq must allow immediate access by international humanitarian organizations to all those in need of assistance in all parts of Iraq, and must "make available all necessary facilities for their operations". In voting on this phrase shall we be acting seriously? Has not Mr. Ahtisaari told us on more than one occasion what the transportation situation is in Iraq, what the situation is in Iraq with regard to its destroyed infrastructure?

(Mr. Alarcon de Quesada, Cuba)

For example, did not Mr. Ahtissaari tell us the following in his report: "Underlying each analysis is the inexorable reality that, as a result of war, virtually all previously viable sources of fuel and power (apart from a limited number of mobile generators) and modern means of communication are now, essentially, defunct. The far-reaching implications of this energy and communications vacuum as regards urgent humanitarian support are of crucial significance for the nature and effectiveness of the international response"? (S/22366, para. 9)

Are we forgetting what Mr. Ahtissaari has said in his conclusions? This is what we read in the report:

"... it will be difficult, if not impossible, to remedy these immediate humanitarian needs without dealing with the underlying need for energy, on an equally urgent basis. The need for energy means, initially, emergency oil imports and the rapid patching up of a limited refining and electricity production capacity, with essential supplies from other countries. Otherwise, food that is imported cannot be preserved and distributed; water cannot be purified; sewage cannot be pumped away and cleansed; crops cannot be irrigated; medicaments cannot be conveyed where they are required; needs cannot even be effectively assessed". (ibid., para. 37)

Mr. Ahtissaari recommended that the Security Council at least lift those sanctions that have a basic effect on the ability to feed the civilian population and to face the serious health situation in Iraq.

The very same Security Council that only recently decided to maintain strict control over Iraq and to maintain the sanctions is now supposedly expressing humanitarian concerns about the population of Iraq, while disregarding the realities and the fact that the political problems existing in Iraq itself are

(Mr. Alarcon de Quesada, Cuba)

not unrelated to the actions of intervention by a major Power; what is worse, it is disregarding the very clear obligations that the members of the Council had before entering this Chamber, that they have during this meeting, that they will have at the time of voting, and that they will have in the future - that is, the obligations to act strictly in accordance with the functions granted to it by the Organization and not to think that the gods have given them permission to deal with various world problems in accordance with the interests of a transitory majority.

My delegation will vote on the draft resolution in accordance with those considerations.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I shall now put the draft resolution in document S/22448 to the vote.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour: Austria, Belgium, Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, France, Romania, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Zaire

Against: Cuba, Yemen, Zimbabwe

Abstaining: China, India

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): The result of the voting is as follows: 10 votes in favour, 3 against and 2 abstentions. The draft resolution has been adopted as resolution 688 (1991).

I shall now call on those members of the Security Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Mr. ROCHEREAU DE LA SABLIERE (France) (interpretation from French): What does the Charter of the United Nations tell us? It opens with the following words:

"We the peoples of the United Nations, determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, ... to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person".

Those words announce an ambition. The League of Nations failed because it reflected only a dream. Faced with the reality - that is, the determination of certain States to exercise aggressive power - the dream was unable to resist the upheavals of history.

The United Nations has shown its effectiveness by putting an end to the aggression against one of its Members. The Security Council, which has adopted no fewer than 14 resolutions designed to restore peace and security in the region, would have been remiss in its task had it stood idly by, without reacting to the massacre of entire populations, the extermination of civilians, including women and children.

The civilian populations, Kurds in particular, already so sorely tried in the past, are once again the victims of armed violence. It is a matter of urgency that an end be put to the brutal repression of the Iraqi population and that all Iraqis be able to claim, within Iraq, respect for their rights and their identity.

Violations of human rights such as those now being observed become a matter of international interest when they take on such proportions that they assume the dimension of a crime against humanity. That is indeed what is happening in Iraq. The influx of refugees, the continued fighting in the border areas, the increasing number of massacres are arousing indignation and are threatening international peace and security in the region.

That is why France took the initiative of putting before the Security Council the text of the resolution we have just adopted. This text is at one and the same

(Mr. Rochereau de la Sabliere, France)

time a condemnation of the repression against Iraqi civilian populations in many parts of Iraq - particularly in the Kurdish area, but also in the South - an appeal for respect for the human and political rights of all Iraqi citizens, without discrimination, and a demand addressed to Iraq to allow immediate access by international humanitarian organizations to all those who need assistance in all parts of Iraq.

In our view, these demands are the minimum that the members of the international community must make in order to live up to the commitments they entered into when they adhered to the Charter of the United Nations. They are the minimum reflection of the faith they have expressed in the equality of rights of men and women in all nations; the most obvious expression of the guarantee they have given that no use will be made of the force of arms, except in the common interest.

Therefore, France hopes that the end of a painful conflict will be, for all those who have suffered from it on their own soil, the beginning of a genuine peace.

Mr. LI Daoyu (China) (interpretation from Chinese): We are concerned with the situation in Iraq and the huge influx of refugees into Turkey and Iran, as described in the letters from the Permanent Representatives of those two countries, and we wish to express sympathy for the difficulties confronting Turkey and Iran as a result of that influx. However, this is a question of great complexity, because the internal affairs of a country are also involved.

(Mr. Li Daoyu, China)

According to paragraph 7 of Article 2 of the Charter, the Security Council should not consider or take action on questions concerning the internal affairs of any State.

As for the international aspects involved in the question, we are of the view that they should be settled through the appropriate channels.

We support the Secretary-General in rendering humanitarian assistance to the refugees through the relevant organizations.

Based on the position I have just set out, we abstained in the vote on the resolution.

Mr. HOHENFELLNER (Austria): When I addressed the Council only two days ago, I expressed my country's grave concern about reports of heavy fighting and bloodshed in Iraq, with disastrous consequences for the civilian population, in particular in the area inhabited by Kurds and others. In the meantime, this situation has taken on an even more alarming dimension. Both Turkey and Iran have brought to the Council's urgent attention massive flows of Iraqi refugees towards and across their borders. Turkey has informed us about the plight of some 220,000 Iraqi citizens, many of them women and children, massed along the Turkish border; their number has since increased to some 500,000. Iran estimates that about an equal number of refugees will try to cross the border into Iran within the next few days. More than 110,000 Iraqi civilians have already done so, fleeing from repression by Iraqi Government forces.

This enormous flow of refugees constitutes an important factor of tension and potential destabilization in the countries neighbouring Iraq, thus posing a serious threat to peace and security in the region. With a view to safeguarding appropriate conditions for providing the civilian population with the necessary humanitarian assistance, Austria supported the French and Turkish iniviatives to

(Mr. Hohenfellner, Austria)

ensure that the Council fulfilled its duties and responsibilities under the Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security and urgently pronounced itself on this pressing issue.

The resolution just adopted addresses as a matter of urgency the issue of humanitarian relief to the refugees and the displaced Iraqi population. My country considers it of the utmost importance that immediate access to all Iraqi civilians in all part of Iraq be given to the international humanitarian organizations and that Iraq make available, to the extent feasible, all necessary facilities for their operation. The least the Council can do is to lend its full, strongest possible support for a massive humanitarian effort by the Secretary-General and the relevant United Nations agencies. Austria has already taken the first steps to provide humanitarian emergency aid to the refugee population concerned. In view of the exceptionally grave situation, Austria has asked the Government of Turkey to open its borders to the refugees.

Mr. PICKERING (United States of America): The United States warmly welcomes the adoption of resolution 688 (1991).

The United States is profoundly concerned about the plight of displaced civilians in Iraq, who are suffering because of the brutality of the Iraqi regime. This problem has tragic human consequences and presents serious implications for regional peace and security. We are gratified that the Security Council has addressed it on an urgent basis. This is, of course, a specific case which has arisen in the aftermath of the Gulf crisis.

President Bush has condemned the Iraqi Government's continued attacks against its own citizens - Kurds and Shiia and all the others, men, women and children, seeking to flee repression. We have called on Iraq's leaders to halt these attacks immediately and to allow international relief organizations to help these desperate

(Mr. Pickering, United States)

people. We have demanded that Iraq facilitate the work of the appropriate international organizations to ensure that vital humanitarian aid reaches those in need throughout the country.

This resolution expresses the concern of the Council over the situation in Iraq, and the Council's condemnation of the Iraqi Government's continued violence towards its own people. The resolution insists that Iraq meet its humanitarian responsibilities. It is not the role or the intention of the Security Council to interfere in the internal affairs of any country. However, it is the Council's legitimate responsibility to respond to the concerns of Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Iran, concerns increasingly shared by other neighbours of Iraq, about the massive numbers of people fleeing, or disposed to flee, from Iraq across international frontiers because of the repression and brutality of Saddam Hussein. The transboundary impact of Iraq's treatment of its civilian population threatens regional stability. That is what the Council has addressed today.

The United States fully supports the resolution, and it urges all States to heed the Council's call to provide assistance to those in need. Throughout the crisis created by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait the United States has contributed generously to the care and maintenance of those displaced by the inhumane policies of the Iraqi Government. We will respond similarly to this latest example of inhumanity.

President Bush has just announced, this afternoon, his decision to undertake a major new effort by the United States, in light of the current tragedy, to assist Iraqi refugees and displaced persons. Beginning this Sunday, the United States Air Force will drop into northern Iraq food, blankets, clothing, tents and other relief-related items for suffering civilians. We expect the Government of Iraq to permit this effort to take place without interference.

(Mr. Pickering, United States)

We will also be consulting with the United Nations and coalition partners on how best to assist these people over the longer term. President Bush will shortly sign an order authorizing up to $10 million in additional aid for refugees in the region; we have already provided some $35 million in aid to refugees since the beginning of this crisis. Our military will continue to help displaced persons in southern Iraq, and we are willing to send a military medical unit to the Turkish border area to assist. We shall also be communicating to the Government of Iran our willingness to encourage and to contribute to relief efforts for refugees there. And we will be making additional contributions to the United Nations Children's Fund and the International Committee of the Red Cross for inoculation programmes to benefit children and civilians in Iraq.

President Bush has asked Secretary Baker to travel to Turkey, on his trip to the Middle East, to meet with President Ozal and to visit the border area in order to assess the situation personally and report back. It is our earnest hope that the resolution we have adopted today will send a clear message to Iraq and generate the desired response so that the suffering of its people can be alleviated and will stop.

Mr. VORONTSOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): The Soviet Union reacted with understanding and concern to the appeal made to the Security Council by Turkey and Iran in connection with the extremely alarming situation that has come about on the borders with Iraq and the threat it has created to international peace and security in the region.

Hundreds of thousands of peaceful inhabitants, including women, the elderly and children, barefoot and hungry, are fleeing from Iraq along snow-covered mountain paths under artillery fire and bombardments, trying to save their lives.

(Mr. Vorontsov, USSR)

As we have seen from reports, the hostilities are already threatening to spill over into neighbouring countries. The continued worsening of the situation in the region, which is quite close to our own borders, cannot fail to arouse serious concern in the Soviet Union, and the situation is viewed with concern in many other countries. We agree with the view expressed by the Permanent Representative of Iran to the United Nations to the effect that the consequences that these events have for regional peace and security call for joint action by the Security Council from both the political and the humanitarian standpoint.

In its approach to the problems that are brought before the United Nations the Soviet Union firmly adheres to the principle of the inadmissibility of interference in the internal affairs of sovereign States, as set forth in the relevant provisions of the United Nations Charter. We therefore believe it important that reference is made in the very beginning of the resolution to Article 2, paragraph 7, of the Charter. Whatever conclusions are to be drawn from the Kuwait venture, this is a matter for the Iraqi people to solve. The sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of Iraq must be ensured. However, it is the duty of the Security Council and of the world community as a whole to put an end to the conditions that are forcing hundreds of thousands of peaceful inhabitants to leave their homeland and seek refuge in neighbouring countries; this is creating a destabilizing situation in the area and posing the threat of a new international conflict.

It is for that reason that the Security Council has drawn attention to the fact that the major cause of the massive transborder flow of refugees is the hostilities and repression being visited upon broad sectors of Iraq's civilian population. With other members of the Security Council, the Soviet Union cannot remain indifferent to the new sufferings of the Iraqi people, who have already been

(Mr. Vorontsov, USSR)

forced to bear an onerous burden and many privations. We therefore fully support the noble efforts of the United Nations Secretary-General, including his dispatch of a special mission to Iraq, as well as the efforts being made by the relevant United Nations specialized agencies and international and national humanitarian organizations, to do everything possible to alleviate the situation of the refugees and to solve the humanitarian problems of the entire Iraqi people.

Based on the foregoing considerations, the Soviet Union voted in favour of the draft resolution sponsored by the delegation of France and other countries, which has now become Security Council resolution 688 (1991).

Mr. GHAREKHAN (India): Throughout this tragic crisis my delegation has consistently made one point: its concern for the sufferings and loss of life of innocent people. My delegation is fully aware of the extremely unsettled conditions in Iraq and the horrendous toll they are taking on the people.

Only where such conditions, including indiscriminate use of force, result in a clear threat to international peace and security would it be within the competence of the Security Council to address the issue. My delegation is seriously concerned at the massive exodus of civilians from Iraq that has resulted from what is happening in that unfortunate land. The international community should be concerned enough to offer them succour and to demand that conditions be created to enable them to return to their homes in safety and in dignity. It should not prescribe what should be done, for that would impinge on the internal affairs of States.

In the situation as it prevails in the region my delegation urges restraint on all sides and expects them not to do anything that might further aggravate it. In our deliberations and decision-making within the Council, we should at all times keep in mind the need to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of

(Mr. Gharekhan, India)

States - including, in this case, of Iraq. This is a cardinal principle in international relations that deserves to be reiterated in the Council.

The Council, my delegation feels, should give serious consideration to the statement of the Permanent Representative of Iraq today inviting the Secretary-General or the Council to send a fact-finding mission to his country.

My delegation had the opportunity to consult closely with the sponsors of the resolution just adopted. Our endeavour was to focus the attention of the Council on the aspect of the threat or likely threat to peace and stability in the region rather than on the factors that have created the present situation. We believe that the Council should have concentrated on the aspect of peace and security, which is its proper mandate under the Charter, and left the other aspects to other, more appropriate organs of the United Nations. It was in that spirit that we had suggested to the sponsors some amendments to make the resolution more balanced and appropriate for this body. The response we received was serious, and we appreciate it. My delegation welcomes the inclusion of a reference to Article 2, paragraph 7, of the Charter, which is an element that improves the resolution.

However, the sponsors did not find it possible to accept the basic thrust of our amendments. This explains why we abstained in the voting.

Sir David HANNAY (United Kingdom): My delegation is delighted to see this resolution adopted and to have cosponsored it. Our only regret is that it should have taken so long for the Council to respond to the human tragedy which has been unfolding before our eyes in the mountains of northern Iraq during recent days. We have a way here of making even simple matters complicated, and I fear that the Council's recently acquired and well-justified reputation for decisiveness has taken a bit of dent in the last day or two.

But now we are moving ahead again, and we have adopted a resolution which accomplishes two crucial tasks. The first is, it sends a strong and clear message

(Sir David Hannay, United Kingdom)

to the Government of Iraq that it must stop the repression, the harrying and the killing of innocent men, women and children which is at the root of this massive exodus into Turkey and Iran.

Secondly, it gives firm backing to the Secretary-General, to the United Nations specialized agencies and to all the governmental and non-governmental organizations whose efforts are now so urgently needed if even more lives are not to be lost. It has been argued in our debates that this action is in some way outside the scope of the Security Council, that it is an entirely internal matter. My delegation cannot accept that, and I am glad the resolution makes clear that it is not so. For one thing, Article 2, paragraph 7, an essential part of the Charter, does not apply to matters which, under the Charter, are not essentially domestic, and we have often seen human rights - for example in South Africa - defined in that category. In any case, the Turkish and Iranian letters to the Council make it clear that there is a very real threat here to international peace and security. The huge surge of refugees is destabilizing the whole region.

(Sir David Hannay, United Kingdom)

Thirdly, there are Iraq's international obligations, under Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions of 1949, to protect, in the case of internal armed conflicts, all innocent civilians from violence of all kinds to life and person. Now, all this fully justifies the action by the Security Council. The humanitarian problems are horrendous, and we therefore warmly welcome the intention of the Secretary-General to launch, on 8 April, an overall appeal for help, and we hope that, in his appeal, he will cover the activities of all the various United Nations specialized agencies. We need a massive aid effort, but we also need a well-focused and a well-coordinated one.

For our part, we have already announced that we will contribute £20 million, bilaterally and multilaterally, to this appeal for the relief of the Kurdish people and for other humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people. This is in addition to £1 million announced yesterday for an airlift of blankets and tents to Turkey and an earlier grant of £2.5 million to the International Committee of the Red Cross.

This huge international humanitarian effort is essential, but it must not conceal the basic responsibility for this human tragedy. That lies fair and square at the door of the Government of Iraq, whose brutality to its own population is matched only by its aggressive actions towards its neighbours, and by its disregard for international law and for all civilized standards of behaviour. Faced with a Government which ruthlessly gassed numbers of its compatriots a couple of years ago, no wonder the Kurds flee in terror in their hundreds and their thousands.

I said a few days ago that my Government found it hard to see how Iraq could hope to rejoin the civilized community of nations while Saddam Hussein and his acolytes remained in power. Nothing that has happened since then has encouraged us to change our mind.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I would now like to make a statement in my capacity as representative of Belgium.

My Government, at the very beginning of this week, expressed profound concern at the policy of blind and systematic repression of which the Iraqi civilian population has been the victim in some regions of Iraq, particularly in the Kurdish regions. Belgium condemns these acts in the strongest possible terms.

The policy of repression in some regions of Iraq has caused major displacements of populations towards the countries neighbouring Iraq. The scale of these exoduses, the destitution of the refugees and the enormity of their needs of all kinds have caused extremely critical situations to arise on the borders of these States. Furthermore, this policy of repression has already caused serious border incidents.

International peace and security are therefore threatened. The Council was therefore duty bound to respond to the initiative of the authors of the resolution which has just been put before it, which Belgium also sponsors. As far as Belgium is concerned, such support is in this case justified by the very specific considerations arising from an exceptionally serious situation which threatens peace and security in the region.

In joining in condemning the repression in Iraq, in the Kurdish regions most specifically, my country wishes, in addition, to ensure observance of the most basic principles of humanitarian law and of human rights. The relevant provisions of the Geneva Conventions, to which Iraq is party, oblige it, in the event of internal armed conflict, to show consideration for the civilian population and to treat it humanely. All the items of information we have in our possession prompt us to conclude that Iraq is deliberately refusing to comply with these essential, international legal obligations. My country fully supports the Council in its demand that Iraq put an immediate end to the current repression.

(The President)

My delegation therefore reminds the Iraqi authorities of their international obligations and their previous undertakings, according to which they must afford the humanitarian organizations immediate, unrestricted access throughout Iraq to the populations in distress.

Furthermore, the Belgian Government urges the Iraqi leadership to establish without delay a political dialogue with all the components of the Iraqi people, especially the representatives of the Kurdish population of Iraq, with a view to ensuring that the Iraqi population in its entirety can exercise freely its civil and political rights and that human rights are observed, while at the same time reaffirming the principle of the territorial integrity of Iraq and of the other States in the region.

My country associates itself with the international community's effort to come to the aid of the victims of repression, and is taking the necessary steps to take part in it actively.

I now resume my function as President of the Council.

The next speaker is the representative of Italy. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. SCIALOJA (Italy): Let me express our satisfaction at seeing you preside over the Security Council during the month of April. We are confident that your great skill and experience will allow you to conduct the proceedings of the Council in the best interests of the United Nations and of the international community as a whole.

Let me extend also our thanks to the Permanent Representative of Austria, Ambassador Hohenfellner, who presided so excellently over the Council last month.

I also extend our warmest welcome to the Council to the Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire, Ambassador Bechio.

(Mr. Scialoja, Italy)

I am speaking to express the utmost concern of the Italian Government at the cruelty of the repression by the Baghdad Government of the civilian population in many parts of Iraq, including the Kurdish areas, where hundreds of thousands of refugees have gathered near the borders with Turkey and Iran. The European Community and its Member States have strongly condemned the brutal repression, which, by causing serious tensions along the borders, also threatens international peace and security.

The Italian Government fervently hopes that the Iraqi Government will promptly end this persecution and start a process of democratization by engaging in a constructive dialogue, with all the components of the Iraqi population, leading to the establishment of a just society based on full respect for human rights and civil and political freedoms.

For these reasons, Italy fully shares the concern expressed by members of the Security Council and other Members of the United Nations on the dreadful situation of the Kurdish refugees, and expresses its appreciation of the resolution just adopted by the Security Council. We expect that the Iraqi Government will immediately abide by the provisions of the resolution by bringing its illegal actions to an end. Moreover, we express our conviction that the Secretary-General will be able to address the critical needs of the refugees.

The Italian Government has, on a bilateral basis, decided to offer humanitarian assistance to the displaced populations and to supply emergency aid to help Turkey and Iran face the dramatic problems that would arise from the massive influx of several hundred thousand refugees into their countries. A technical mission to assess these needs is on its way.

(Mr. Scialoja, Italy)

We sincerely hope that concerted action on the part of the international community will convince the Iraqi Government of the necessity of solving any problem democratically, in order to eliminate tensions in a region of paramount importance for international peace and security. In this context, the Italian Government expresses its satisfaction at the decision of the Iraqi Government to receive the mission provided for in operative paragraph 4 of resolution 688 (1991).

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I thank the representative of Italy for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Germany. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. RANTZAU (Germany): As this is the first time that I have addressed the Council under your presidency, Sir, I should like, as other colleagues have done, to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of April. I, as all others, am confident that your professional experience and personal outstanding qualities will fully benefit this body in discharging its important responsibilities.

I should also like to thank the Permanent Representative of Austria, Ambassador Hohenfellner, for his outstanding stewardship of the Council during the month of March.

Germany is following the most recent developments in Iraq with the greatest concern. The brutal use of weapons and other agents of destruction against the Kurdish minority and other parts of the Iraqi population, and the mass exodus its has precipitated, harbour the danger of genocide. After the horrible crimes of 1988, human rights are again being flagrantly violated. International peace and security are in jeopardy. The United Nations, and in particular the Security Council, are called upon to take appropriate steps immediately.

(Mr. Rantzau, Germany)

In 1988, Germany cosponsored Security Council resolution 620 (1988), which condemned the use of chemical and biological weapons in the war between Iraq and Iran. It also requested the United Nations Secretary-General to launch an immediate investigation whenever the deployment of such weapons is suspected, even within a country's own borders. Already then, my Government was deeply concerned about the cruel treatment of the Kurdish minority in Iraq.

With resolution 687 (1991), the Security Council has set itself the goal of restoring peace and security in the region. The efforts undertaken to this end by the Security Council will only be successful if domestic peace in Iraq is also ensured.

It is the legitimate right of the international community to call for respect for human rights. This means that no ethnic or religious group may be persecuted or discriminated against. When a national minority keeps finding itself in a position where it is forced to fight for its rights, and when it therefore has to endure great sacrifices and human suffering, it proves that its legitimate claim is crudely violated by the leadership of the country. The repressive measures of the Iraqi army are of indescribable cruelty: villages are levelled, human beings are fired upon, and the civilian population is bombed.

The international community has to undertake all appropriate efforts to prevail upon the Iraqi Government to enter into negotiations with the representatives of the Kurdish minority and to concede to this brave and proud people a status commensurate with its hopes and aspirations. This should not infringe upon or jeopardize the integrity of the Iraqi State. My Government welcomes the fact that the Security Council has now followed up on its cease-fire resolution 687 (1991) by urgently calling upon Iraq to put an immediate end to the persecution of the Kurdish minority and other parts of the population. My

(Mr. Rantzau, Germany)

Government also feels that their return to their settlements under the supervision of United Nations observers should be ensured.

The international community bears responsibility for ensuring that the human rights of all Iraqis, of all ethnic and religious communities, including the Kurds, be observed. The persecution of this ethnic group and the armed repression against it must be stopped. It must not be subjected to any punishment. The Kurds must be given the rights they were promised many years ago and that all Iraqis are entitled to. It is in the interest of the Iraqi Government, in the interest of stability and security in the region, and especially in the interest of those desperate human beings, that peace be restored within Iraq.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I thank the representative of Germany for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Luxembourg. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. FEYDER (Luxembourg) (interpretation from French): As the representative of a country bound to yours by many deep ties of friendship, I take special pleasure in conveying to you, Sir, my most earnest congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. I should also like to join in the thanks you conveyed two days ago to Ambassador Hohenfellner of Austria.

The Government of Luxembourg is alarmed and deeply concerned by current events in Iraq and on its borders. Hundreds of thousands of Iraqi citizens, especially Shiites and Kurds, are fleeing a bloody and pitiless repression visited upon them by the army of the Iraqi Government. What is absolutely shocking and contrary to the norms of international law is that soldiers are firing upon innocent and defenceless civilians, destroying homes and hospitals, and harassing and killing fleeing populations.

(Mr. Feyder, Luxembourg)

We believe that this is flagrant violation of the principles of humanitarian law as established by the Geneva Conventions. We are also witnessing massive and tragic violations of the human rights of all those men, women and children who have been forced to abandon their homes and flee towards an unknown fate.

The information we have been provided by the Governments concerned and by the media also clearly demonstrates that this problem has become international. The refugees, and especially the Kurds in the north of the country, wish to leave for the neighbouring countries, Turkey and Iran. Some have managed to do so, and others are hastening to reach the border. An enormous problem faces the Governments of those countries. An entire region is now threatened with destabilization, which affects peace and security. We are all called upon to show sensitivity towards and solidarity with those people now facing new trials following upon those imposed on them by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

(Mr. Feyder, Luxembourg)

Together with its partners in the European Community, my Government condemned the brutal repression against these civilian populations, especially the Kurds and Shiites, which gave rise to the flow of refugees I have just described. The Community and its 12 member States call upon the Iraqi authorities to put an end without delay to this repression which, in the past, already severely affected the Kurdish population. They believe that only the path of dialogue with all the parties concerned can lead to the restoration of a united and legitimate Iraqi State committed to respect the populations of which it is comprised.

That is why it was absolutely necessary for the Security Council to act and to take a clear-cut decision on the draft resolution submitted to it on the initiative of the French delegation. My Government welcomes its adoption a few moments ago. The Council thereby discharged its responsibilities in the face of the tragic situation in which the population of Iraq finds itself and in the face of the border problems which have arisen. I should like to thank all the delegations which so kindly extended me their cooperation in recent days.

My Government hopes that all national and international resources will be brought to bear in order to come to the assistance of the populations in distress. Special importance in this regard goes to the activities conducted by our Organization, its Secretary-General and specialized agencies. Emergency assistance will be undertaken by the European Community in the coming days.

Whatever the future of Iraq, the Luxembourg Government believes that the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of Iraq and of all the other States of the area must be respected. We all agree, too, in emphasizing that it is up to the Iraqis alone to determine their future.

Last November some non-aligned members of the Council put before the Council a draft resolution in which they expressed the hope that the Governments of the

(Mr. Feyder, Luxembourg)

region, especially that of Iraq, would take appropriate effective steps in order to strengthen their democratic institutions and practices. More and more Iraqis, both inside and outside Iraq, are now speaking out for the establishment of a pluralistic democratic system mindful of human rights.

We should ask ourselves whether this is not now the path to follow in order to enable the populations concerned to express their will, thus contributing to the establishment of a genuine peace in Iraq.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I thank the representative of Luxembourg for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Denmark. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. MORTENSEN (Denmark): I shall be as brief as possible, Sir, but allow me to join others in expressing my delegation's great pleasure in seeing you presiding over the Council.

Today, the world is once again witnessing human rights and fundamental freedoms being grossly violated.

The Danish Government has strongly condemned the brutal repression and suffering that has been imposed upon the civilian population in Iraq, notably the Kurds and the Shiites.

Iraq must immediately put an end to these atrocities and engage in an open dialogue to ensure that the human rights of all Iraqi citizens are fully respected. In this connection, we note the desire of the Kurdish leaders to preserve the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Iraq. The human tragedy unfolding in Iraq, as a consequence of the brutal and bloody actions against civilians, has brought about a flow of refugees towards Iraq's neighbouring countries.

(Mr. Mortensen, Denmark)

The magnitude of the human suffering and the transboundary problems involved makes it natural for the international community to deal with the matter and for the Security Council to take the necessary measures. Denmark therefore welcomes the adoption of resolution 688 (1991).

The international community must render assistance to alleviate the plight and suffering of the Kurds and others fleeing the fighting and bloodshed in Iraq.

To that end, the Danish Government for its part has today decided to contribute, as an immediate step, 9 million Danish kroner, corresponding approximately to $1.5 million.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I thank the representative of Denmark for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Ireland. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. HAYES (Ireland): First I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of April. Your skills and abilities are well known to me personally and I am certain that your tenure of the presidency at this important time will be successful.

I should also like to congratulate Ambassador Hohenfellner of Austria on having successfully led the Security Council in the month of March.

May I also join others in welcoming the new Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire, whom we are so pleased to see occupying the seat of his country in the Council.

Ireland fully supports the resolution just adopted by the Security Council. The Government and the people of Ireland are deeply concerned at the situation of the civilian population in Iraq, notably the Kurds and the Shiites, and they firmly condemn the brutal repression being imposed on these population groups.

(Mr. Hayes, Ireland)

They call on the Iraqi authorities to put an end to this repression, which has already in the past severely affected the Kurdish people. The flow of refugees to neighbouring countries resulting from this repression is a cause of serious humanitarian concern. Ireland is ready to join with the rest of the international community to alleviate their plight. Iraq's neighbours must not be left to shoulder this burden alone.

The repression of the Kurds and Shiites must be condemned in the strongest terms. The Kurds have the right to live within Iraq, with full respect for their culture and language. We call on the Government of Iraq to follow the path of dialogue to ensure that the human and political rights of all Iraqi citizens are respected.

Any attempt to interfere with Iraq's sovereignty, territorial integrity, or political independence, would be unacceptable as well as detrimental to the prospects for peace and security in the region. The resolution just adopted makes this clear. At the same time, respect for the territorial integrity of Iraq does not take away from its obligations to engage in dialogue to ensure that the human and political rights of the Kurds and Shiites are respected within Iraq.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I thank the representative of Ireland for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Spain. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. VIQUEIRA (Spain) (interpretation from Spanish): May I first associate myself with the congratulations expressed to you, Sir, by preceding speakers on your assumption of the presidency of this important organ.

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the asked to be allowed to speak in order to express before the Security Council Spain's complete support for resolution 688 (1991), which has just been adopted.

My country has been following with deep concern the brutal repression unleashed by the Iraqi authorities on its own civilian population, in particular the Kurds and the Shiites, and it fears the repercussions this may have on peace and security in the region.

In addition to the enormous magnitude of the suffering and the loss of human life, this repression has created a problem of displaced persons and refugees of epic proportions, has deeply moved the public opinion of the world, and of Spain in particular, and has inspired a number of States Members of the Organization to take an initiative whose result is the resolution just adopted.

Spain joins the rest of the international community in firm condemnation of the systematic violation of human rights committed by the Iraqi authorities against their own civilian population, and also demands an immediate end to these inhuman practices, as well as respect for the human and political rights of all Iraqi citizens.

In conclusion, my Government is prepared to cooperate with the Secretary-General and the United Nations in all efforts aimed at alleviating the suffering of the Iraqi civilian population.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I thank the representative of Spain for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Sweden. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. ELIASSON (Sweden): Let me begin by congratulating you, Sir, and the Security Council on your assumption of the presidency of the Council. We have great respect for your professional ability and for your country's strong attachment to the Charter.

We also commend our colleague and friend Ambassador Hohenfellner for the wise and skilful way in which he guided the Council's work in March.

I would also join others in welcoming the new Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire to this important body.

A great number of people in Sweden, many of them recent immigrants with their origin in the Middle East, view with sorrow and apprehension developments now unfolding in Iraq in the aftermath of the actions for the liberation of Kuwait. The credibility of the United Nations demands that the Organization shoulder its responsibility also for developments following measures authorized by the Security Council, especially as these developments entail the suffering of large numbers of innocent people.

The Iraqi leadership's violent suppression of opposition forces in various parts of Iraq - in the South and, most recently, in the Kurdish-populated areas - has brutally affected the civilian population. The desperate situation of thousands and thousands of civilians trying to take refuge in neighbouring countries is appalling. These people urgently need help from the international community as a whole.

The magnitude of the suffering of Iraqi refugees already has had international consequences across the borders of Iraq. Events in Iraq have a direct impact on

(Mr. Eliasson, Sweden)

the future peace and stability of the region as a whole. That peace and stability has been a stated objective of Security Council resolutions. Thus an international reaction through the Security Council is indeed legitimate and timely from both a political and a humanitarian perspective. This, in our view, in no way diminishes the validity and the importance of Article 2, paragraph 7 of the Charter.

Lasting regional peace and stability demand respect for human rights and decent treatment of minority groups. A solution to internal problems in Iraq can be achieved only by dialogue and a political process. Violence against a defenceless civilian population can never be excused. Instead of using what remains of its military machine against the opposition, the Iraqi Government should negotiate with the groups that oppose it.

The Kurds in Iraq must be put in a position of being able to enjoy their inalienable rights as a minority group. They should be given the possibility to express their identity freely within the State of Iraq and in accordance with their own aspirations.

Concerted action is needed to give humanitarian aid to the suffering civilian population in the Kurdish-populated and other areas of Iraq. We commend the Secretary-General for his efforts to prepare a coordinated programme of emergency relief for Iraq. Such an emergency programme should be based on established principles and criteria for humanitarian relief, designed to reach the affected populations in all areas of need, including the areas of the Kurdish population. We must also find ways of caring for the many displaced persons inside Iraq.

It is equally important for the United Nations to address the rapidly growing refugee problem in the border areas between Iraq and Turkey and between Iraq and Iran. The absorption capacity - long drawn upon - of those two neighbours of Iraq is obviously not adequate and must be strengthened by international assistance.

(Mr. Eliasson, Sweden)

In line with its traditions, Sweden is ready to continue to make its contributions to the international efforts to alleviate the suffering of civilians in Iraq and the many refugees outside Iraq's borders.

Let me, in conclusion, say that we are today facing not only a pressing humanitarian problem but also a challenge for the United Nations and its standing as an organization that builds peace for the future and improves the condition of man.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I thank the representative of Sweden for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of the Netherlands. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. VAN SCHAIK (Netherlands): I am pleased to see you, Sir, as a Benelux colleague in the Chair. I am convinced that the presidency could not be in better hands.

I wish also to join others in thanking my colleague Ambassador Hohenfellner for the excellent way he presided over the Council last month.

I should like to welcome our colleague the new Ambassador of Côte d'Ivoire, Mr. Jean-Jacques Bechio.

(Mr. Van Schaik, Netherlands)

Like previous speakers, I wish to express my Government's grave concern about the repression of the Iraqi civilian population, including most recently in Kurdish populated areas. The fact that I have asked to speak about this very serious matter testifies to my Government's profound concern about the situation. The people of the Netherlands are deeply disturbed, for obvious humanitarian reasons. We are also preoccupied with the serious implications for international peace and security in the region. We insist that Iraq observe its commitments arising from international instruments to respect the fundamental rights and freedoms of its civizens.

We fully support this initiative, and my Government endorses the resolution that has just been adopted. The public at large would not have understood the dealings of this Council if after the 14 resolutions that have been adopted on the situation in the region the Council had remained silent on this matter.

The representative of Luxembourg, Ambassador Feyder, referred to the statement that the European Community and its member States have made, in which they have expressed their very deep concern over the situation of the civilian population of Iraq. We indeed firmly condemn the brutal repression being imposed upon these population groups.

We also wish to draw attention to the implications of the massive flow of refugees and displaced persons towards neighbouring countries. We look forward to any action the Secretary-General takes to pursue his humanitarian efforts in favour of the victims of repression. We trust that Member States will make a substantive contribution to humanitarian organizations to alleviate the plight of Iraqi people that find themselves in unbearable conditions as a result of these events. The Netherlands is prepared to shoulder responsibility with the international community in its humanitarian efforts to create conditions for a return to civilized life by the Iraqi people.

(Mr. Van Schaik, Netherlands)

We urge Iraq to open a dialogue to ensure that the human and political rights of its people are fully respected.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I thank the representative of the Netherlands for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Portugal. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. DA COSTA PEREIRA (Portugal): May I first congratulate you, Sir, on your accession to the presidency of the Security Council and extend to you our best wishes for your work during the current month.

I should also like to say how much we appreciate the work of Ambassador Hohenfellner in presiding over the Council last month and the way in which he carried out his duties.

I wish also to welcome the new Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire.

Portugal follows with great concern the grave situation on the borders of Iraq with Turkey and Iran. With the other members of the European Community, it firmly condemns the repression of the civilian population in many parts of Iraq, which constitutes brutal disrespect for basic human rights.

We believe that only dialogue with all the parties concerned would allow the shaping of a renewed Iraq, united and respectful of the legitimate rights and aspirations of the population groups of that country.

The Portuguese Government fully supports the resolution that the Council has just adopted and hopes that the current deterioration of the situation will soon come to an end in order to avoid further loss of life of innocent human beings.

We deeply hope that the humanitarian assistance efforts to take place under the auspices of the Secretary-General will alleviate the suffering and meet the critical needs of the refugees and displaced Iraqi population.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I thank the representative of Portugal for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Norway. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. HUSLID (Norway): Let me express the pleasure of my delegation, too, at seeing you, Sir, presiding over the Security Council.

The behaviour and action of the Iraqi authorities, not least against their own population, have for an extended period of time given cause for grave concern. In this connection, we all remember with abhorrence the attack on Iran, the purges in Baghdad and in particular the shocking gassing of the civilian Kurdish population. Recently there was the unprovoked invasion and occupation of peaceful Kuwait, which the international community, under the Council's auspices, succeeded by a considerable joint effort in bringing to an end only a few weeks ago.

However, barely was that war over than we had to witness the destructive attacks against the people and the cities of the Shiite communities in the south of Iraq. Now the turn of the Kurds and other minorities in the East and the North has come.

The world cannot sit in silence and allow this to continue. The Iraqi regime must be brought to understand that its actions are totally unacceptable, reprehensible and, indeed, immoral.

For these reasons the Norwegian Government condemns the actions perpetrated against the Kurdish population and other groups, in contravention of internationally accepted human rights standards and norms of behaviour. We call on the Iraqi authorities to halt such actions immediately.

(Mr. Huslid, Norway)

We join others in calling for concerted international humanitarian aid to Kurdish refugees and others suffering from the repression inflicted by the Iraqi authorities.

Finally, we express the hope that the international community as a whole will take joint responsibility in all these respects. On behalf of the Norwegian Government, I pledge our full support for all efforts to meet the needs of the refugees. Norway has already supported the international humanitarian actions in this respect, inter alia by a recent cash contribution of 10 million Norwegian kroner - $1.5 million. We stand ready to offer further support in this hour of need.

On behalf of Norway, I wish to give our support to the resolution the Council has just adopted.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I thank the representative of Norway for the kind words he addressed to me.

I should like to inform members of the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Canada and Greece in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those members to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Fortier (Canada) and Mr. Exarchos (Greece) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): The next speaker is the representative of Canada. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. FORTIER (Canada) (interpretation from French): It is getting late, Mr. President, you are hungry, and I shall be brief.

First, I should like to congratulate you on assuming the presidency of the Security Council and to express our thanks to the Ambassador of Austria for his presidency during the month of March. I should also like to bid a warm welcome to the Ambassador of Côte d'Ivoire.

(continued in English)

Canada continues to be deeply disturbed by the suffering of the Iraqi people as a result of the brutal repression by the Iraqi authorities of their civilian population. The Government of Canada has called upon Iraq to refrain from actions that would exacerbate the suffering of Iraqi civilians.

(Mr. Fortier, Canada)

Regrettably, this suffering is continuing and growing. There has been a massive movement of civilians away from the areas of fighting and towards and across international borders. As the resolution just adopted by the Security Council makes abundantly clear, these movements, along with cross-border incursions, pose an undeniable threat to international peace and security in the region. That is why, in the opinion of my Government, it was proper and within the mandate of the Council to act as it has done on this matter.

Meanwhile, unfortunately, the suffering of the innocent civilians in Iraq continues. Canada remains in constant touch with the international humanitarian organizations such as the Red Cross and the United Nations Disaster Relief Organization. This afternoon in Ottawa Canada announced an initial contribution of $3.3 million to these and other organizations to help provide the basic needs of the displaced citizens of Iraq, both inside Iraq and in neighbouring countries.

But money alone will not end the suffering. The only way to do that is for Iraq to give the fullest cooperation to international humanitarian organizations, to facilitate their work and to respect fully the human and political rights of all Iraqi citizens without further delay.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I thank the representative of Canada for the kind words he addressed to me.

The last speaker is the representative of Greece. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. EXARCHOS (Greece): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of your duties as President of the Council for the month of April and to express my confidence in the success of your task in view of your well-known professional skill and ability. I should also like to express my appreciation for the skillful performance of your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Austria, during the month of March.

(Mr. Exarchos, Greece)

On 28 March 1991 my Government expressed its grave concern and deep regret with regard to the recent developments in Iraq as well as the reported use of violence against its Kurdish-populated areas. That stand is consistent with Greece's firm opposition to the use of force, and particularly military methods, aimed at solving domestic problems.

Furthermore, Greece, along with its European Community partners, has condemned such practices and called upon the Iraqi authorities to put an end to the repression without delay and engage upon the path of dialogue. We firmly believe that these problems can be solved only through dialogue in full respect of the territorial integrity and unity of Iraq.

Finally, in order to alleviate the plight of the afflicted populations of Iraq, the Greek Government yesterday decided to dispatch immediately humanitarian assistance to the afflicted populations through the Hellenic Red Cross.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I thank the representative of Greece for the kind words he addressed to me.

There are no further names on the list of speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 8.25 p.m.